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FM AMEMBASSY DHAKA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3742
INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 9792
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 9018
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1583
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 7860
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 2529
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT 0240
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//ISA/NESA
RUEKDIA/Joint STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J2/J5
RHFMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI//J2/J4/J5

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DHAKA 000569

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO AIAG/HOLLIS SUMMERS, AIAG/TONY NEWTON AND
AIAG/NICHOLAS STUDZINSKI
DELHI PLEASE PASS TO FAS/OLIVER FLAKE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: TBIO KFLU PREL PGOV BG
SUBJECT: BANGLADESH MOVES ON BIRD FLU, BUT NOT AS QUICKLY AS DONORS
HOPE

REF: (A) DHAKA 533, (B) DHAKA 480, (C) DHAKA 117

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. GOB actions do not have a sense of urgency, and the FAO/WHO approved National Response Plan is not being closely followed. The donor community is trying to develop a means to urge GOB action; key to that is the current FAO technical assessment reported septel. END SUMMARY.

THE LOCAL CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING APRIL 3.

¶2. (SBU) FAO began by briefing the 35 attendees on the situation to date, namely that Avian Influenza is still spreading in poultry in Bangladesh and has not been contained. The GOB, however, is not treating the outbreak with a real sense of urgency. The GOB is enacting a one kilometer infected zone (instead of three kilometers per National Response Plan), and even within that one kilometer zone culling is not 100%, instead seeming to opt for a farm to farm selective process. FAO substantially revised the index date and the index location of the H5N1 outbreak from February 22 in Savar to February 5 in Jamalpur. Details of compensation for culled birds are still vague, but compensation is being discussed for 'backyard poultry' only, not for the commercial farms. Approximately 70,000 birds have been culled to date, but there is no official report on the number of birds that have died from avian influenza.

¶3. (SBU) The key decisions taken by the Group were first, donor groups need to establish areas of responsibility to avoid duplication of effort. Completing and disseminating the matrix of donor activities is a first step towards that goal. Second, principal officers of bilateral and multilateral missions, NGOs and the private sector must urge the GOB to treat the avian influenza outbreak with urgency, emphasizing the international dimension of this problem. The main issues for immediate GOB action:

Communication. GOB communication seems to be lacking both with the public and with the donor community. UNICEF is frustrated that additional public service announcements are bogged down in bureaucratic approval stages and feels that the GOB is acting as if the situation is contained and no more communication is necessary. Also, donors expressed frustration that the GOB's focus is on "what can you give" rather than identifying what the GOB needs.

Implement the National Response Plan. The GOB's failure to follow its own guidelines for culling is one key indicator that the

plan itself is not being followed. There is an international dimension to this outbreak, and the international community would like to establish an 'advisory board' to have contact with the National Advisory Committee at the highest levels, and possibly with parallels at other levels throughout the organizations responding to the outbreak.

Use Available Resources. The World Bank proposal for \$22 million in grants and credit for animal surveillance remains in limbo awaiting GOB action on several prerequisites. Likewise, the GOB has been reluctant to move forward on USAID identified local currency funds available for use in response to the outbreak.

FAO ACTION

¶4. (SBU) Dr. Gleeson, FAO Regional Manager, Emergency Center for Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases, arrived from Bangkok April 4 to undertake an assessment of the situation. Dr. Gleeson met with the donor community on Friday April 6 and briefed the Advisor for Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock on April 7, reported septel. This visit is a critical step in emphasizing the severity of the situation and advocating GOB action.

GOB ACTION (AS OF APRIL 5)

¶5. (SBU) Information from Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock:

Inspected Farms	19,303
Number of Inspected Poultries	16,594,098
No. of Farms with Confirmed H5 Virus	19
No. of Districts with Confirmed H5 Virus	06
Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Tangail, Jamalpur, Jessore	
No. of Culled Farms	25
Dhaka 8 (Savar-7, Turagh-1), Gazipur-4, Jamalpur-4,	

DHAKA 00000569 002 OF 002

Narayanganj-7, Tangail-1, Jessore-1	
Culled on April 2, 2007	None
Culling up to April 2, 2007	69,897

For reference, estimates are that there are between 180 to 200 million chickens and 30 million ducks in Bangladesh.

¶6. (SBU) WHO reports that antiviral drugs (Tamiflu) are given to workers engaged in the culling operations; this is in accordance with WHO recommendations that these workers both wear appropriate protective equipment and take antiviral drugs.

USG ACTION

¶7. (SBU) PACOM has identified Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits that are available for shipment to Bangladesh. Currently, a placeholder figure of 10,000 units is being used, pending USAID officer's determination of the actual usage rates of PPE.

¶8. (SBU) USAID's grant agreement with FAO on avian influenza has been extended and additional funds can be added to the agreement.

¶9. (SBU) Post has created a webpage on the State Department intranet to act as a repository for information and documents relevant to Avian Influenza in Dhaka and to facilitate sharing. It is available at <http://10.208.1.12/dhkavianinfluenza.htm>.

BUTENIS